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# Christian Order

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# Christian Order

EDITED BY

Paul Crane SJ

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## A Thought for Easter

THE EDITOR

MANY years ago, at a lecture he gave at a Summer School of the Catholic Social Guild, when the memory of Hitler's savage Nazi onslaught on the peoples of Europe was still fresh in our minds, that great Catholic speaker and writer, the late Frank Sheed, spoke of the danger of what could be the totalitarian State of the future. "It is easy enough", he said, "to recognise Caesar when he comes at you in a pair of jackboots, clad in black shirt and breeches, with a revolver at his hip, a truncheon in his hand and a belt-full of bombs round his belly. You see him then and you know what he is; and what is in store for yourself. All you can do under such ugly circumstances is run, if you can, surrender or stand up and die. But, he added, it is a very different thing, if he comes not *at* you but *to* you, with a benevolent smile on his face, nicely kitted out and properly dressed, and his hands loaded, not with guns, but with bottles of free milk: that is the Caeser of the future".

Frank Sheed was a far-seeing man and he spoke at a time when the beginnings of the Welfare State — a very different thing from Civil Welfare — were then under way.

I will not pursue that story here; but halt it, for I wish to draw a parallel with the state of the Church today. You might say that contemporary Poland has been and still is confronted with the beastliness of basic Secularism in its crudest form; which is exactly what Communism is. As such, it is totally recognizable in all its ill-kempt coarse-

ness (to all but the purblind) as the exact opposite of everything in which a Catholic, who really is a Catholic, believes. But, there are other forms of Secularism—seemingly not so basic as that which characterises Communism—more akin by parallel to the benevolently smiling visage of the donor of free milk.

It is precisely with these secularist forms that Catholics in what I will call the West have to contend. I will place them all, for short, under a general title and call it Naturalism, the Way of the World, which does not set out deliberately to drive Catholics out of the Faith but draws them out of it by reason of the easy ride through life it *apparently* offers to all. (I say *apparently* because, in so many cases, the ride is an exceedingly rough one and there is many a crash along the way.) Deprived despite the Council, as so many Catholics have been, of that solid and true instruction in the Faith that is their due, their eyes have been caught, then fixed, on the here and now with all its seeming joys, as distinct from that which we know rightly as Eternal Life; trapped thereby in time, with fading thoughts of Eternity, against the background of which life here on earth can only be lived and gone through as it should be. Deprived, as they never should be at this time of running confusion and neo-Modernist infestation within their own Church, of the courageous leadership that should be given them, far too many Catholics—especially the younger ones—have found themselves lost and continue to find themselves lost in the prevailing secularist confusion. For this I do not blame them primarily. I blame those who should have shown them the right way and failed to do so. Instead, they have been shown that which is wrong.

In consequence, they have been caught by the prospect of an easy ride through life offered by the would-be builders of that easy-riding Church, coasting along in the wake of the secularist tide, which is the neo-Modernist dream. Small wonder, then, that the *aggiornamento* or updating of the Church to meet better the needs of the contemporary world, for which the Council called, along with the adjustment required by that process, was transformed in the wake of the Council, under the guise of renewal “in the spirit of Vatican II”, from *adjustment* to meet better the needs of the modern world into *assimilation* with it.

This deceitful sleight of hand put over by the self-appointed neo-Modernist "experts", who took charge of affairs at diocesan and parish level in the years that followed the Council and who are still with us, found only too willing a following within the ranks of the diocesan clergy and male and female religious. This, because the minds and hearts of the latter, in so many cases, had been drawn to the attractions of an easy-riding Church within an increasingly secularised world, even before the Council began. Its call for openness to the world gave these the cue they wanted; the opportunity for which they had waited, almost without knowing it. When it came, then, they took it with both hands; and the neo-Modernist clerical secularisers were there to show them the way. The rest you know. There has been no renewal. Doctrine in too many cases has followed liturgical and devotional practice out through the window. We are left, so very, very often with a doctrinal mish-mash that passes for the Faith, to which one generation has been largely lost, whilst another is on the way to so being.

In this issue of *Christian Order*, two stalwart and perceptive Catholic laymen tell their own stories, which serve only to emphasise what I have said already in this Editorial. What emerges is perfectly clear. There must be no let-up at all in the efforts of all those of us, who hold to the Faith of our Fathers, to stem the secularist tide. We must confront the secularizers within our midst and their would-be man-made Church with the Church that is divine and true because founded by Jesus Christ, our Lord and our God. At the same time, we must pray without ceasing that the true Church will gain the victory over the Fake which so arrogantly confronts it and oppresses its members. "Fear not", said Our Lord, "I have overcome the world". He did and so will we with His help; and *only* with His help, sought in ceaseless prayer.

Let this be not only our Easter thought; but our Easter resolution. Christ rose triumphant on the third day. The true Church will do the same. It is of God. It cannot be withstood.

The Author of this article, by this time well known to readers of *Christian Order*, reflects here on the attitude of Catholics to the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist, as it is now and as it used to be. The comparison is in no way comforting.

# Loss or Gain

A LAYMAN'S VIEW

J. C. L. INMAN

## *Communions Up: Confessions Down*

WHEN each year during Lent I hear the congregation reminded about the dates between which Easter Duties should be performed, my mind goes forward to the Feast of Corpus Christi and then comes back to the "Penitential Season". Certainly, until recent times, the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion used to be closely linked; Confession and Communion once a year being the absolute minimum requirement, most practising Catholics had much more frequent recourse to both Sacraments. But the facts today are inescapable; while the number of Communions has soared, (one of the very few areas in the "renewed" Church where there is any discernible growth), the number of Confessions has plummetted. Could it be that "renewal" has made us better, less sinful people ? I don't think so for one second. Could it be that "renewal" has changed the nature of sin ? Is a lie now any less of a lie, a calumny any less of a calumny, an adultery any less of an adultery ? If this is so, I am totally incapable of seeing how or why. Could it be that, along with a decline in the sense for the sacred, there has been a decline in a sense of sin ? This seems a far more likely reason for the growth in receptions of Our Lord and the decline in the desire to receive another form of Sacramental Grace. Let's face it, we very rarely hear about sin these days, and when we do it is mentioned in a kind of apologetic, half-hearted and circumlocutory way, as a kind of afterthought amid all the exhortations to love. As to reception of Communion however, it seems to be expected these days that we should "eat our meal" with

scarcely a thought as to what we are actually doing; that we should join the cafeteria queue as a near reflex action near the end of Mass.

### *Corpus Christi: Then and Now*

The habits of Catholics always have been formed by what they witness and by what they are taught. It is not the object of this article to examine the vast subject of whether we have gained or lost from—standing reception, reception in the hand, reception under both kinds, lay ministers, varied eucharistic prayers said out loud, the removal of tabernacles, and their attendant sanctuary lamps to side-altars or obscure hidey-holes, the virtual demise of Benediction, Exposition and Corpus Christi processions. The object is to examine the difference between what we used to be taught about the Blessed Sacrament in the liturgy and what we are taught today, for the liturgy is the main life-long contact point of most Catholics with their Faith.

At Mass on Corpus Christi we used to hear I. Corinthians II and John 6. 56-59. Today we hear Deuteronomy 8.2-3, 1 Corinthians 10.16-17 and John 6. 51-58, more extensive and therefore more comprehensive instruction one might assume, in keeping with the desire of the Fathers of Vatican II that the liturgy be more didactic. Certainly, the new readings remind us of the links between the Old and New Testaments by mentioning the miraculous food called Manna which sustained the Israelites in the desert, which we didn't get in the past, and both sets of readings tell us of Christ's institution of the Sacrament and the merits of receiving it. So far so good, but what about the teaching we used to get at the end of 1. Corinthians II? Is this bit of Scripture still important teaching today, or has it been "revealed" to be a trivial, peripheral matter? Whichever it is, it is no longer brought to the attention of the Faithful on a great feast. For more centuries—centuries before 1970—than there have been years since we got this yearly reminder: "Therefore, whosoever shall eat this bread and drink of the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of the chalice. For him that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgement to himself, not discerning

the body of the Lord". My feeling is that this is fundamental and clear teaching about what has been called the Great Sacrament, necessary and appropriate to every day and age; but, clearly, there are those in high places who must think otherwise. Could it be that they "think" that such teaching is far too off-putting for post 1970 Catholics, or for Protestants? I have no means of knowing. All I do know is what the Church taught and what the Faithful believed in for many centuries, that worthiness was required when we received and that there was both guilt and judgement if we failed to discern the nature of what we were receiving. The teaching is still in Scripture but, quite simply, it is no longer taught; the attitude seems to be "let some communicants commit what is technically sacrilege, either wittingly or unwittingly, but don't put them off receiving, whatever they've done".

### *Communion Queues: Then and Now*

It is God's role, and that of those to whom He has given the power, not mine, to pass judgement upon the worthiness or otherwise of people in the cafeteria Communion queues these days. All I can do is to record what I know. There are today, as there always have been, casual Mass attenders, those who turn up if they have nothing more "important" to do, such as going to the seaside, recovering from a hang-over, going to a sporting event or to a Sunday market where "everything's so cheap". In the past, none of them would have received Holy Communion until they had been shriven, but today they join the queue without a thought in most cases, and some who do have a twinge of conscience still receive. One such told me, "I suppose I shouldn't, but it is embarrassing not to receive when virtually everyone else does"! I know unfailing Mass attenders who always receive but who haven't bothered about the confession part of their Easter Duties for a considerable time. I don't know if murderers receive, but "remarried" divorcees certainly do. Calumniators receive; Catholics "communicate" in Protestant churches and vice versa. The confusions over discerning what the Body of the Lord IS used to be confined to what used to be called "Other denominations", but today they are rampant within the Church. This is not in the least surprising in an era when it seems that the Church

is afraid of causing offence outside its ranks and therefore evades putting the Faith over in its fullness.

### *Offence Taken and Given Today*

This whole subject of evasions so as to avoid giving offence has led to widespread gutlessness and, in my opinion, it cannot lead to the strengthening of anybody's faith. Offence is seldom caused by courteous agreement to disagree. Indeed, much more offence is caused by pretence to agree when it is eventually realised that the pretended agreement was a fraud. Ecumaniacal "Agreements" that are omission or evasive must, eventually, create far more offence than if they had never been entered into in the first place, since some people will feel they have been deceived. In the unrenewed and united Church of the recent past, there were few cases of Catholics offending each other with their "views", since people didn't have "views"; they had the Faith, but today in the renewed but disunited Church there is much offence. I've come to know a bit more about it! If one says nothing, one offends "activists" by one's lack of "commitment" and "involvement". If one says anything, one is likely to get stick from one or more quarters. I know! It seems that I am far too "wet" for some traditionalists, far too "dry" for some "moderate conservatives"; I am a "deserter" as far as the radicals are concerned and, as for the "main stream" well, you name it and I've had it — disloyal, disobedient, incapable of "understanding", dreamy, nostalgic and so on. This article can only cause offence somewhere, but I accepted the inevitability of this some time ago, around the time I faced up to the disunity within the Church and decided to protest, hopefully trying to retain three things — a sense of humour (for so many "activists" of whatever sort seem to be deadly dull people), a sense of balance, and to be consistent. I often harp on balances and imbalances in *Christian Order*, and I make no apology for doing so; this article is on the same theme.

### *Old-time Sermons: a Bad Example*

It is some years since I heard a sermon on the inevitable end of all of us, death and judgement, heaven or hell. This must contribute to the decline in the desire for recourse to the Grace dispensed by the Sacrament of Penance. A sense

of and for sin? I believe that it could be grossly overdone in the past, and that it is grossly underdone at present. I'll give you two personally experienced examples. The first, pre-conciliar experience, was of an atypical but by no means rarely met priest who seemed to have a very acute nose for and sense of sin. He was a massively built man, he seemed to be both rather dim and a bully, and he had a captive congregation. He preached domineeringly, of that there was no doubt. Without any need for modern electronics, his voice carried loud and clear so that even the skulkers at the back of quite a big Church had to hear his message. After about every fortieth or fiftieth word he would positively thunder out the phrase "And you'll go to Hell", the phrase accompanied by an emphasising and reverberating crash of his ham-sized fist upon the pulpit. Children and youngsters reacted basically in two ways; some were terrified, while others had difficulty in repressing their giggles, much to the embarrassment of their parents, since their imaginations were not concentrated upon Hell but upon the more mundane matter of how long it would be before the pulpit was reduced to matchwood under the ferocious battering it was receiving. Ah, but they were continually disappointed, for the craftsmen who built pulpits in those days built them to last, whatever the mode of preaching conducted therein. Unless "renewal" would have changed this priest's "style" of approach to the faith, he would have demolished several modern Ambos per sermon. But he died before such a possibility could be put to the test, and I have no means of knowing whether he would or would not have been a valued customer of the local timber merchant. He was not, as I have said, typical of his times, but his type most certainly existed, and they were of no spiritual help, at least to me. We are all made as we are, variedly, and for me no amount of ranting and raving about sin will impress me differently than the near absence of a mention of sin. At the end of the day, I've got to face God; by the time that happens, a time unknown to me, His judgement will, or so I believe, depend upon what choices I've consciously made from all the conflicting advice I've received. And, while I'm aware of the odd success in the chosen avoidance of what I believe to be sin, I'm only too well aware of my dismal, pathetic failures.

## *New-time Sermons: a Good Example*

The second post-conciliar, example is—of the nature of much that is post conciliar—more complicated. A priest who seemed to me to be very well balanced preached at the time the revised rite of the Sacrament of Penance was being introduced. He started with what looked like a sheaf of notes, but he quickly abandoned these, leaned forward on the Ambo, and spoke thus : “Look, I know that many of you have become confused, and not a few of you unsettled, because it seems that everything is changing. You are not alone in this, I can assure you. We clergy, your priests, don’t know what we may be explaining to you in a couple of year’s time much, if any, better than you do. All I can do is to tell you that the Faith has not changed a scrap, it is only the forms in which the Faith is expressed that are changing. The vital thing to try to grasp and to hang onto is this; nothing fundamental has changed, it is only the way the Church is trying to get it over to you that is changing. Take the Sacrament of Penance. It always did, and will in the future, reconcile sincere penitents with God. Nothing has changed here. Sin is still sin, and the Sacrament of Penance has always been, in the past, at present, and in the future an essential source of Divine Grace. The form in which it is administered may vary and change, as do the penances ! It is a long time since people were given penances such as making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, or wearing sackcloth and ashes in public view throughout Lent ! In future, you will have the choice of either confessing as you always have done in the confessional, or in a personal, more discursive way with the priest in what are going to be called reconciliation rooms. But, for goodness sake, grasp this : the Sacrament has not changed one iota, and if you look into your hearts, if you examine your consciences, you haven’t changed a scrap either, you are still the same old fallible, sinful and loveable lot you always were. Your need for the Sacrament of Penance has not been changed any more than you have changed. You need it as much as ever. God bless you”.

## *The Permissive, Post-Conciliar Approach: a Failure*

Eight years after hearing this sermon, or, if you prefer, homily, I met this priest again, by chance. After a few

preliminary pleasantries, I asked him "Father, while no-one can expect you to remember every sermon you've ever given, do you remember one you gave when the new rite of penance was being introduced"? He replied "I remember it well, and the whole subject haunts me. While the numbers coming to confession were already declining, they have fallen far faster since the new rite came in, but I'm not blaming this on the new rite itself. In my opinion, the key to the catastrophic decline in the numbers seeking the Sacrament is the cumulative effect of the Church's failure to face up to teaching about sin these days. Cardinal Ratzinger is 100% right when he says that much that has been done in the cause of renewal is in fact defective, it is a process of decadence, and one of the biggest defects is the tendency to glorify love, very often in a humanistic way, and largely ignore our failures to love, our sins. I think this permissive approach is half-baked, it has done nothing to strengthen people in the Faith and has done everything to confuse them and weaken their Faith. If the people are not taught the Faith, how on earth can they be expected to know it? You can quote me if you like, but anonymously please, since I've got to try to make the best of a bad job of this decadence in the parish I'm responsible for, in the knowledge that parishioners who don't like occasional reminders about sin, which they get from me, have only to go two or three miles down the road to other parishes where my brothers in the cloth can be relied on to seldom if ever mention the subject. I am glad however that in these days of the laity "shopping around" for Mass, with its attendant sermons, I seem to be gaining more shoppers from neighbouring parishes than I am losing to them. You should hear some of the "fraternal" exchanges at clergy meetings! After all, we are not entirely disinterested in the collection plate".

### *Bad Workmen Blame Their Tools*

Like this, I believe, balanced priest, I've got to make the best of a bad job of life in today's Church, and as a layman I am a freer agent than most priests, I can plead in public for the correction and, if necessary, abandonment of palpably failed "new approaches" to the Faith. While I am by no means entirely unsympathetic to those who have re-

sponsibility and who hold authority in the Church, I rate any loss of "face" they might incur through acting to rectify mistakes, as trivial compared to the continuing damage that is being done by the continued pretence that the content of our renewal is correct; that it is the fault of priests and people and not of "renewal" itself that to-day the Church is a disunited, extensively debilitated and squabbling mess. Priests and people are the tools of the Church, only the consecrated are workmen, and I'm a great believer in the saying that bad workmen blame their tools.

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### AT ST. HILARION'S . . . .

"Good morning. Welcome to our Holy Mass".

\* \* \* \*

Good morning. Welcome to Calvary. This is Jesus Christ, bleeding to death on the cross. Notice His mock-crown: it is made of thorns; they have been driven into His Head. This is His Mother . . . .

\* \* \* \*

"Good morning. Have a good day . . . ."

—R. S.

The Author, who continues to wage on a world scale a fight against abortion that can only be described as heroic, traces in this short article the accelerating and, indeed, frightening growth of Islam throughout the world. The figures speak for themselves.

# The Burgeoning of Islam

PAUL B. MARX, O.S.B.

OF all world religions today, none is growing and spreading as is Islam. For the first time in history the religion of Mohammed and Christianity are growing neck and neck. This information comes from the London Research Institute for the Middle East, and is based on various sources, including the *Yearbook of the United Nations*.

The Institute reports the Moslems have exploded in numbers from around 200 million in 1934 to more than 800 million today. More than one-fourth of humanity claim Christianity as their religion. Catholics now represent 860 million out of a total of 1.5 billion Christians in a world population of about 4.9 billion. Catholicism is growing dramatically faster than Protestantism, which has decimated itself more by contraception-abortion-sterilization.

In third place for numbers stand the Hindus, with about 685 million adherents, an increase of more than 100 per cent since 1934. The Buddhists follow with 296 million, a 65 per cent increase.

The Jews number 15 million, having grown only four per cent since 1934. This slow growth is partly a result of the Holocaust of the Nazi era which took millions of Jewish lives. What the Institute did not report, however, is that the Jews are committing a Holocaust upon themselves through Hitler's revenge, i.e., abortion. Israeli parents, surrounded by 100 million Moslems, kill an estimated 100,000 Jewish

babies annually through abortion; the six million Jews in the United States have only about one child per completed family.

(Incidentally, Ireland is now the only developed country in the world with a good reproductive birthrate. It's falling fast, however, because of increasing contraception-abortifacients-sterilization. Behind the Iron Curtain, only the USSR has a reproductive birthrate, thanks to her 60 million Moslems. The average Soviet wife has six abortions in her lifetime. Abortion is the chief means of birth control throughout the Soviet block).

In general, all world religions have grown notably since 1934 except the Orthodox churches, Confucianism, Taoism and Judaism. But the big growth for Christianity and Catholicism comes definitely from the southern continents. In Europe and North America the number of Christians decreases daily by 7,200; in Africa, Christians grow daily by 16,400, according to the German *Christliche Weltenzyklopädie*.

The growth of Islam in Western Europe, says the London Institute, is the "greatest socio-religious change and development of our time." Islam is now the second largest faith in Europe after Christianity.

Out of 21 million "guest workers" and their children in Western Europe, seven million are Moslems. For example, there are 4.7 million "Gastarbeiter" and children in West Germany, more than one-third of whom are Moslem. France has even more proportionally. Dr. Emmanuel, a French scientist, has calculated that by the year 2035, if things continue as now, this "eldest daughter of the Catholic Church" will be largely a Moslem country!

A similar situation exists in England where there are 300 mosques (some of them former churches) and 22 English-language Moslem newspapers. The mosques in these and other European countries are largely built with Arab oil money; so was the huge, global communication centre in London for Moslems living in the West. A mosque has even been erected in a fashionable district of Rome.

What the Moslems never accomplished by centuries of warfare against Europe, they're accomplishing ever so gradually by immigration and high birth rates. In Yugoslavia there are four million Moslems, the remnant of

Islam's last invasion of Europe, which was stopped at the gates of Vienna 300 years ago. These four million followers of Mohammed have three times more children than the Catholic Slovenians and Crotians there.

The Prophet had urged his followers to conquer the world with the sword in one hand and the Koran in the other. In Yugoslavia, seminary professors quoted to me local Moslem leaders as saying, "We don't need the sword today—we have the children". Seeing parishes shrink and disappear, a Croatian pastor started the "One More Child" movement, which has since become nationwide. (Human Life International hopes to start the One More Child movement in the USA.) Europe isn't the only area experiencing rapid Islamic growth.

One reason for the debacle in Lebanon is that for years the more educated Catholics had fewer children while the Moslems increased and multiplied; this helped wreck the balance of power upon which civil peace rested !

And did you know there are 31 million Moslems in Red China ? 82 million in India ? 153 million in Indonesia ? In Africa, where every seventh person is a Catholic, the high Catholic birthrate barely matches that of the Moslems. Some day the two communities may collide—if the Moslems ever stop fighting each other.

Even in the USA Moslems are growing rapidly, having increased some 400 percent in the 1970's. In this country there are now more than 600 mosques. In 1983 the Moslems completed North America's third largest mosque near Toledo, Ohio; this will house the first training center for Imams, with an Islamic university to follow. America's estimated three million Moslems now outnumber Episcopalian or Japanese-Americans. By 2015 Islam may be the USA's second largest religion.

Why are Christians dying out in the West ? You know well the theological reasons. **BUT THE BIGGEST REASON IS THAT WESTERN EUROPEAN, CANADIAN, AND AMERICAN CHRISTIANS ARE MURDERING MILLIONS OF THEIR UNBORN CHILDREN THROUGH PILL-IUD MINI-ABORTIONS AND SURGICAL ABORTIONS.** They literally prefer animal pets to human babies !

How can the "Christian" West survive now that it has embraced the pagan death style? For the developed countries overcopulation, not overpopulation, is the problem. As Chesterton shrewdly observed, "Birth control means no birth and no control". Or in the words of an old, somewhat crude motto, "He who does not breed does not breathe".

The future? God only knows! But meanwhile the Catholic bishops, theologians, priests, nuns and politicians who fell for the contraception and overpopulation hoax should heed the warning of University of Texas Islamic expert James Bill: "Over the next 40 years, populist Islam is going to be the most important ideological force in the world."

---

### JUST A THOUGHT ....

The converts of to-day,  
Unless they are  
Very fortunate,  
Will be urged  
By their Parish Priest  
To attend  
Non-Catholic  
Services,  
And perhaps  
Be addressed  
From a Catholic pulpit  
By a minister  
Of their  
Former  
Religion.

—R. S.

In his second commentary on last year's Extraordinary Synod, written a few days before its opening, Philip Trower illustrates with perceptive insight the episcopal mind as contrary to that of the Holy Father, particularly in its view of episcopal collegiality. This appears to the Author as in favour of placing National Hierarchies largely outside the jurisdiction of the Pope (Gallicanism) and subjecting his divine authority to that of the Council (Conciliarism).

# The Extraordinary Synod

## 2: POPE AND BISHOPS: CONCILIARISM AND GALLICANISM

PHILIP TROWER

AS you read this article, the two-week long meeting of the "Extraordinary" Synod of Bishops in Rome to assess the way the Second Vatican Council has been implemented over the last 20 years will be well underway. But as it goes to press, the College of Cardinals is meeting to discuss the reform of the Curia, and the Synod has not yet begun.

This therefore seems a good moment to record some more statements from authoritative and less authoritative sources, made in anticipation of the Synod, about what it should or should not do, what the Fathers should or should not say, and how good or bad the process of reform has been.

I will start with the Holy Father, and the accusations or insinuations that he has called the Synod in effect to sabotage the teaching and work of the Council.

How can anyone who has informed himself about the part Pope John Paul II played at the Council, has read his

*Sources of Renewal*, written when he was Archbishop of Krakow, and has followed his teaching since (and what writer or theologian who takes it on himself to interpret the Pope's mind ought not to have done all three?) fail to recognize that he is a "man of the Council"?—by which I mean an unquestionable and wholehearted believer in its importance and value for the Church. (No Catholic will doubt that Vatican II was a lawful general Council, or that there were things God wanted said and done through it. But it is possible to think that on the human side the work was more or less well done. It is in this sense that the words "progressive" or "liberal" and "conservative" can have an unambiguous meaning.)

### *"Men of the Council"*

The Pope's choice for important posts at the Synod makes the falsity of the charge against him equally plain.

The three president delegates (the Holy Father is the president) are Cardinal Krol of Philadelphia, Cardinal Willebrands, head of the secretariat for Christian Unity, and Joseph Cardinal Malula, president of the Council of African episcopal conferences.

Without risk of being recommended for psychiatric treatment, it would be difficult to maintain that Cardinal Willebrands wants a return to the *stotus quo* before the Council, and Cardinal Malula (according to *L'Homme Nouveau*) "has always been an ardent defender of the 'inculturation' of the Gospel on the African continent".

Two other obvious "men of the Council" (I repeat the expression to avoid the ambiguities of "liberal" and "progressive", now frequently used as polite synonyms for heretical) are Cardinal Daneels of Malines-Brussels, who has the important role of relator (the official who opens the proceedings with a presentation of the subject of discussion and summarizes them half way through), and the special secretary Fr. Walter Kasper (about whom more later).

The list could no doubt be extended. But this is sufficient for the personal purpose.

The Pope, it is worth noting, has invited observers from the separated churches and Christian communities.

## Collegiality

If all this is not enough to prove that he intends to carry on the work started by the Council, here is a quotation from the Holy Father's speech at St. Paul's without the Walls last Jan. 25th when he made his first announcement about it.

"Vatican II remains the fundamental event in the life of the modern Church . . . For me, who had the special grace of participating in it and actively collaborating in its development, Vatican II has always been, and especially during these years of my Pontificate, the constant reference point of my every pastoral action, in the conscious commitment to implement its directives concretely and faithfully at the level of each Church and the whole Church".

Are these words, and countless others like them, sincere or insincere? If the Pope is really trying to sabotage the Council, they can only be the latter. His opponents therefore are going far beyond accusing him of hostility to the Council. They are in effect asserting that he is engaged in a massive campaign of deliberate deception. Can anyone conceivably make such accusations in good faith?

The other words of the Holy Father I want to quote are taken from two passages in his talk to the Swiss Bishops in 1984 about collegiality and episcopal conferences which I mentioned in my first article. The way people understand collegiality will affect their understanding of the Church, and their understanding of the Church will influence the way they think the rest of the Council's teaching should be understood.

In the first passage, after remarking that "it is of capital importance to invite our priests and faithful to reread these texts (of *Lumen Gentium*), to study them and meditate on them", he spoke of the "solidarity" that should bind the head and members together. Collegiality in the strict sense, he said, means "more than the collaboration of Bishops between themselves, it unites all the Bishops together around the Successor of St. Peter". The solidarity of the Bishops with the sovereign Pontiff, he went on, should be both "affective" and "effective". "Brotherly relations and trust must always play a great part, as is normal for the disciples of Christ whose first commandment was to live in love and unity".

But for collegiality to be "effective" as well, "presupposes oneness of mind about doctrine, and oneness of will about the great mission of the Church". Their "official declarations, actions, orientations, manner of exercising their episcopal ministry in Switzerland", must be in keeping with those of the rest of the Church. This is the meaning of having a "solicitude" for the whole Church to which their office binds them. "All the Bishops in fact should act to safeguard the unity of the Faith and common discipline of the totality of the Church, should form the faithful in love for the whole Mystical Body of Christ". In other words true collegiality is the antithesis of religious and sociological separatism.

But what happens when the members of the College disagree? How is oneness of mind and will to be achieved? Answer: in their "concern and solicitude" for the whole Church, the head and other members have not been given the same kinds and degrees of authority and responsibility for the whole Church. God does not will to work the continuing miracle of having the members automatically think alike or agree with the head. The Pope by himself therefore has a legal and active power of government over the whole Church the whole time. In the ancient phrase he is "the Bishop of Bishops", as well as of all the faithful. The legal and active power of government of the whole College (Pope and Bishops together) only operates occasionally (the general council has been, the normal occasion so far), and only when the Pope requires or consents to it.

However, whenever possible the Holy Father tries to make truth prevail by gentleness. He endeavours to avoid ruffling susceptibilities unnecessarily. Therefore rather than spell out word for word the possibly distasteful details (how strange that they should be so distasteful), he referred his listeners to *Lumen Gentium's* preliminary explanatory note (*nota prævia*), where they could read the small print for themselves.

### *In Communion with the Pope*

Seeing how anxious the opponents of the true meaning of collegiality are that the *nota prævia* should be forgotten, I suggest that you familiarize yourself with its teaching, as

recommended by the Holy Father, and remind people of its existence as frequently as possible.

Here are the salient points. The italicized words are found as such in the original text.

1) "The word *College*", it begins, "is not taken in the *strictly juridical* sense, that is as a group of equals who transfer their powers to their chairman, but as a permanent body whose form and authority it to be ascertained from *Revelation*". (The government of the Church, in fact, is something unique. It is not modeled on, nor should it be made to conform to, secular models.)

2) "There is no such thing as the college without its head . . . and in *the college the head preserves intact* his function as Vicar of Christ and Pastor of the Universal Church. In other words it is not a distinction between the Roman Pontiff and the Bishops taken together"— apart from the Pope—"but between the Roman Pontiff by himself and the Roman Pontiff along with the Bishops".

3) To become a member of the College, episcopal consecration alone is not enough. A bishop must be in communion with the Pope, and — the note insists — that communion is "hierarchical", it contains higher and lower levels of authority with greater and lesser range. Moreover, just as the College is not to be thought of as implying a group of equals, so communion "is not to be understood as some vague sort of goodwill".

4) "The Pope, as supreme Pastor of the Church may exercise his power at any time, as he sees fit by reason of the demands of his office . . . in fact it is only occasionally that it (the College) engages in *strictly collegial* activity and that only with the consent of its head. . . . In default of the Pope's action, the Bishops cannot act as a college".

It was to these last points that the Pope drew special attention. The fact that the Pope can act alone and does not have to summon the College at any particular time or for any particular purpose is the great scandal and sticking-point for Catholics overimbued with the spirit of the age. How could God have given his Church a head not subject to some kind of supervisory body?

How indeed? "My ways are not your ways"— a fundamental theme of the biblical message which even Scripture

scholars, learned in the most obscure problems of textual awareness, seem able to miss.

From all these passages of the *nota praevia*, which simply clarify and strengthen what had already been said in *Lumen Gentium*'s chapter III, it will be seen how impossible it is to find support in the Council for either an Episcopalian interpretation (neo-Conciliarist or neo-Gallican), or a "democratic" Modernist interpretation of collegiality. Indeed this was rapidly recognized by Modernism. There is not a little humbug in Modernism's much-trumpeted devotion to the Council, as the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has just reminded us. The Council was hardly over before Modernism's major-generals were speaking about the Council as a thing of the past, a last product of the clerical age, and looking towards a new and better Council.

The immense significance of the *nota praevia* was recently underlined for us again in an article entitled *Tu es Petrus* by *L'Homme Nouveau*'s editor, Marcel Clement, who was a reporter at the Council. Recalling the uproar that followed Pope Paul's announcement that *nota praevia* had to be considered an integral part of *Lumen Gentium*, he writes: "We can see today that the text of *Lumen Gentium* without the *nota praevia* would have led to a great disorder. It cannot be doubted either — and I was intensely aware of it at the time — that the *nota praevia* saved the constitution of the Church".

The disorder would indeed have been great, seeing what it has been like with the *nota praevia*.

### *Preserving Unity*

The other passage in the Holy Father's talk to the Swiss Bishops I would like to quote from deals with the idea that episcopal conferences ought to have more power because Rome is incapable of understanding the local situation, needs, culture, or experience.

"There can", the Pope said "sometimes be a certain tension between, on the one hand, the wishes and needs of the Christians on the spot . . . and the principles and directives of the *Magisterium* of the whole Church. The problem is similar to that of inculcation in the young

churches. It is indeed true that Christians and their pastors on the spot are well placed to find the opportune way to present these principles, with convincing reasons and precise applications. But it is equally true that they — the Christians on the spot — “are subject to pressure from their environment, and opinions and practices not deriving necessarily from the Faith, or which are not all compatible with it.

“The universal Church — and notably the Bishop of Rome, with the departments of the Apostolic See — provides the inestimable service — even if in more general terms and from a standpoint above particular circumstances — of tracing the sure path based on the living Tradition; takes account of all the different aspects of the Christian mystery and Christian ethics; avoids simplification and pitfalls; and preserves the unity of all the churches”.

There we have it. Those who have the experience of being American, English, or French are not necessarily best placed to understand how to lift themselves above their national particularities, prejudices, and limitations to something higher, nobler, and more universal — the “new manhood” of life in Christ, no less. The inhabitants of the Greek city states of classical times likewise recognized that an “outsider” can be a more impartial judge of people’s needs and situations than the people experiencing them. When their affairs got really badly tangled, they frequently sent for a man of ability from another city state to rule them for a time.

What exactly is the theological and legal status of episcopal conferences? Where do they get their existence and powers from? And in what sense are they or are they not expressions of collegiality?

Cardinal Ratzinger has stated (in his now famous interview with Vittorio Messori) that they are simply a convenience — they are not part of the Church’s original constitution — and Cardinal de Lubac has expressed a similar view, which is also confirmed by history.

### *Pastoral Purpose*

Other information can be derived, as in the case of the Synod, from the new Code of Canon Law (447-459).

The episcopal conference, the first Canon devoted to this subject lays down, exists for bishops of a country or region to exercise "certain pastoral offices for Christ's faithful of that territory. By forms and means of apostolate suited to the circumstances of time and place, it is to promote . . . . that greater good which the Church offers to all people".

To this subsequent Canons add the following:

"It is for the supreme authority of the Church alone, after *consultation* (my italics) with the bishops concerned to establish, suppress, or alter episcopal conferences":

"Each episcopal conference is to draw up its own statutes to be reviewed by the Apostolic See":

"Each episcopal conference can make decrees only in cases where universal law has so prescribed, or by special mandate of the Holy See":

"Decrees do not oblige until they have been reviewed by the Apostolic See and lawfully promulgated":

"When a plenary meeting of the episcopal conference has been lawfully concluded, its minutes are to be sent to the Apostolic See for information, and its decrees, if any, for review":

"The Holy See must be consulted whenever actions or affairs undertaken by conferences have an international character".

From all this, it seems to me, two things stand out. As a legally constituted body, an episcopal conference is neither autonomous, nor does it derive its origin in some way from the "local church". A neo-Gallican interpretation of its status is precluded. Its existence and powers derive from the Holy See. Secondly, the Code speaks of its purpose as pastoral. There is no reference that I can see to its having any special teaching office as a conference — a mandate that would give greater weight to its teaching than that of the bishops of a particular region not organised under a conference.

Is it in some way an expression of collegiality?

In the strict sense it would seem not, since although it acts with the authorization of the College's head, it is only a section of the College acting for the good of a part of the Church. The most it seems to me it can be called is an expression of the "collegial spirit"; the spirit of brotherly

cooperation and unity which the Pope told the Swiss Bishops should be the "affective" mark of the College gathered around the Successor of St. Peter. This is something very ancient. From the earliest times, bishops of a particular region have tended to act together. It hardly needs saying, on the other hand, that a conference working against the teaching and instruction of the College's head would be the antithesis of an expression of the "collegial spirit".

To end with this subject, one would be grateful if authority would give a determined meaning to the expressions "local church" and "particular church"; either "local church" for the individual diocese and "particular church" for the Church in a given region, or vice versa. At present one finds them used interchangeably. Since the diocese (the individual bishop and his flock) is of divine origin, while the region only derives from ecclesiastical law, the present confusion is greatly to the advantage of those working for quasi-independent "national churches".

### *What Went Wrong and Why*

The meaning of collegiality and the status of episcopal conferences is only one subject, even if the most important one, among the many likely to be discussed at the Synod. What opinions of value have been expressed on the Catholic side, other than those mentioned in my first article, about the implementation of the conciliar teaching as a whole?

Obviously at the top of any list must stand what Cardinal Ratzinger has said in his interview with Vittorio Messori, now published in English as *The Ratzinger Report*. In these 197 pages can be found nearly everything that can or needs to be said about what has gone wrong with the conciliar *aggiornamento* and renewal, and why it has gone wrong. One could add too that even more important than what is said is the person who has said it. Although His Eminence gave the interview in a semi-private capacity, it is impossible altogether to separate the person from the position or the unofficial nature of the discussion from its timing. It is all but inconceivable that the Cardinal could have given such an interview at such a moment without some kind of go-ahead from the Holy Father, nor can one

easily see it as anything but part of the Pope's campaign to get things under control. That is why Modernism is having apoplexy. It realizes all this too. Worse still, it recognizes that many of the faithful are going to see the Cardinal's words as having a quasi-official character and respond accordingly.

To the Cardinal's critique, Fr. Balthasar's expose of Kueng's intellectual and theological nakedness in the Oct. 15th issue of the Italian newspaper *Avennire* has been a welcome addition. It would be a pity, however, if these two eminent figures appeared as "lone voices" among the great of the theological world. I would therefore like to quote from an article appearing in the London *Tablet* earlier this year a passage about two other theologians (as much "men of the Council" as the Prefect for the Doctrine of the Faith or his Swiss colleague), who take a similarly serious view of things.

### *"A Conventional Orthodoxy"*

The article in question by a Fr. Aidan Nichols, a professor of dogmatic theology at the Angelicum, who identifies himself as favouring the "truly venerable tradition of Catholic liberalism . . . that wants to keep the boundaries of the Church's discourse as wide as Christian truth will permit", the kind to which the late Cardiaal Wright would probably have considered himself as originally belonging, was written in protest at the campaign *The Tablet* has been conducting against the Pope, the Cardinal, and the Synod. (*The Tablet's* anti-Papalism and hostility to the Cardinal are of longer date.)

"The ablest English Catholic journalists", he writes in his opening paragraph, "appear to have established at home a conventional orthodoxy which sees, hears and speaks no evil unless it be of the Roman See".

What is wrong with this Pontificate's most strident critics, he goes on, is their lack of a sense of reality. "The fact of the matter is that in more than one part of the world, the Catholic Church is manifestly falling apart". Given the prejudices of the *Tablet*, he realizes it is no use producing Cardinal Ratzinger as a witness for the truth of this statement, so he brings forward, out of a number of like-minded

commentators, two figures less easy for the *Tablet* to fault — Fr. Kasper, the Synod's special secretary, and Bishop Carlo Colombo, Pope Paul's personal theologian at the Council and now an assistant Bishop of Milan. He selects them, Fr. Nichols says, "for their independence of spirit, their lack of *Romanita* and their intelligence". Both have recently given interviews similar to Cardinal Ratzinger's, but to another Italian magazine, *Trenta Giorni*, published by the Italian Catholic youth movement *Comunione e Liberazione*.

Here is his summary of their views.

"Kasper's balance-sheet includes four principal debit items in which, he remarks, the hopes raised by the Council have been so far deceived. These are, first, theology; secondly, acquaintance with Christian morality (both of which Kasper bluntly asserts, have rarely reached so low a level); thirdly, Kasper points to the liturgy, which he claims has been denatured by being intellectualized and moralised, as in the 18th century Enlightenment, rather than truly reformed; finally he refers to the collapse in certain features that belong to a fundamental Christian sense of what life is about, specifically, adoration, sacrifice, and penitence. The Council proposed an *aggiornamento* on the basis of a *ressourcement*, a making contemporary of the Church by a return to the origins. But the *ressourcement* has been forgotten in enthusiasm for the *aggiornamento*, the result is an invasion of the Church by an alien spirit, at best *burgerlich*, at worst *neo-pagan*".

From other sources it appears that 52-year-old Fr. Kasper, a professor of dogmatic theology at Tuebingen, is a friend of Cardinal Ratzinger, a member of the editorial board of the German edition of the orthodox theological quarterly *Communio* and the master hand responsible for a new best-selling German catechism giving a full presentation of Christian faith and morals.

### *A Warning*

For Bishop Colombo "the Council was followed by 20 years of naive optimism, in which a general attitude of openness, *aperturismo*, was hailed as the panacea for all evils. Colombo compares the present state of the Church

vis-a-vis the Council to the century between Nicea and Ephesus, when the judgments of the Bishops of Nicea were rejected by left and right alike, on the one side the Arians and semi-Arians, on the other the Sabellians. The faith of the Council, its basic Christian insights and message, on this view *cannot* be Papally endangered because it is *not yet established*".

One is only inclined to add that if the faith of the Council is "not yet established", it is difficult to see how anyone can be guilty of having rejected it. The Bishop's remarks, I suggest, only show how inadequate the terms "left" and "right" are to describe the situation. But if they are used, it should at least be said that, insofar as "the right" has rejected anything — one presumes the Bishop means Archbishop Lefebvre and his followers — it is very largely distortions of the Council concocted by "the left".

Fr. Nichols ends his article with a warning.

"If such moderate and moderating voices as those of Kasper, Colombo, and yes, Ratzinger are met with a stone-wall of blank incomprehension, genuine or assumed . . . then the result may well be that other guardians less sensitive and open to dialogue will take their place. . . . All is not well in the garden of our commonwealth. Those gardeners are to be valued who prune judiciously in the hope of saving every plant. Those who would come instead with spade and shears already exist".

Fr. Nichols' article appeared last March. *The Tablet* has remained behind its stonewall of blank incomprehension firing increasing numbers of missiles.

### *"It is up to the Bishops"*

A reference to *The Tablet* seems a good point to start introducing some statements and opinions from the "other side".

The sound waves of the Holy Father's announcement of the Synod were scarcely still before *The Tablet* (Feb. 2nd, 1985), in an article headed "A Challenge to Bishops", was egging them on to demand, on the one hand, more independence locally (on the basis of the principle of subsidiarity), and on the other to insist (in the name of collegiality)

on being allowed to control the Synod and the Curia at the center.

"The Pope wants to know", wrote the article's author, "their (the bishops') opinion of his analysis of the Council. They feel a duty to be frank. For many bishops feel that full effect is not being given to the collegial exercise of authority. Whereas Vatican II laid the emphasis on the team, Pope John Paul lays it on the captain. . . . A striking instance was the recent grant of permission . . . to return to the celebration of the Tridentine Mass. . . . One result of this style of carrying on the Papacy is that the Synod of Bishops . . . has never fulfilled its collegial promise. . . .

"Other Christians are closely watching how Rome is exercising its authority. They do not like what they see. . . . The bishops alone can change this. . . . The bishops who attended Vatican II were strong enough to repudiate the agenda that had been prepackaged by the Curia and start again. Those who attend the Synod will not be able to do that: there will not be time. So the bishops must begin now. . . . It is up to the bishops".

And so on in article after article throughout the spring and summer.

In August the English Hierarchy's response to the pre-Synod questionnaire made it plain to the world at large that, if they had not done so before, the majority of the English Bishops had now finally surrendered to these siren sounds.

### *"A Bitter Attack"*

However, the campaign against Rome, the Pope, and the holding of the Extraordinary Synod did not really get into its stride internationally until after the publication of Cardinal Ratzinger's *Report on the Faith* in mid-June.

*L'Homme Nouveau* has tabulated the stages as they succeeded each other in France.

1) A summons to battle, similar to the *Tablet's*, called the "Montpellier Appeal" is immediately launched by a group of priests and theologians in the southwest of France. Only a few bishops publicly support it. But numerous writers and prominent journalists give it their backing and major media coverage, including Henri Fesquet of *Le Monde* (France's *New York Times*).

2) A spate of hostile reviews and articles of the Cardinal's book.

3) At the begining of August, *Le Monde* publishes a series of three articles by a Philippe Pons, described by *L'Homme Nouveau* as "supple and nuanced" but nevertheless "a bitter attack on the present Pontificate, particularly for its centralism and moral demands".

4) Shortly after *Temoignage Chretien* publishes and gives wide circulation to the English Bishops' response.

5) Two books attacking the Cardinal and the present Papal policy, one by a Dominican, Francois Biot, the other by a layman, also receive extensive publicity. Biot's book is called *Get up and Walk: A Reply to Ratzinger*.

6) In August a "world synod" of married priests (150 in all) from 15 countries meets in Rome. In its final declaration it proclaims priestly celibacy "dogmatically and legally illegitimate".

7) *Temoignage Chretien* launches what is called "Operation Synod". Readers are urged to: study and tell people about their publication's special numbers and articles; acquire and publicize the English Hierarchy's response; read and make Biot's book known; write to their bishops and tell them what they think.

8) In September, the once-Catholic paper *Le Vie* polls the views of 2,000 priests about the Pope's teaching on marriage and sexual morality, married priests, ordination of women, and so on.

At the same time the publishers Desclee de Brouwer issue a book of 312 pages called *The Presbytery Shutters Are Opened: 2,000 Priests Speak*.

Meanwhile the Swiss Bishops have issued a communiqué about the Synod, and the international theological quarterly *Concilium* prints an "open letter" on the subject (to the Church? The world?).

For the Swiss Bishops, it seems, "the difficulties which have arisen since the end of the Council derive not so much from an erroneous presentation of it as from the rapid and profound sociocultural revolution taking place. They hope that positive progress will be made in the understanding of collegiality".

### *A Revealing Remark*

*Concilium's* open letter, which in the version printed over here is unsigned, is presumably issued in the name of the editorial board, the names of whose leading figures read like a Modernist "role of honor": Edward Schillebeeckx, Hans Kueng, Gustavo Gutierrez, Leonardo Boff, Jean Baptiste Metz, Jacques Pohier. It also includes Fathers Congar and Chenu.

The first condition for the Synod's success, the open letter declares is that "we all, individually and together commit ourselves to help our bishops to be true to their calling"; the second, that "our bishops show the same resourcefulness, the same independence of judgment, the same courage" as they did at Vatican II. "We ask them to speak out in a way that is beholden to none, but is theirs by right". And elsewhere: "Too many suffer on account of the lack of progress on problems as important for the People of God as ecumenism, the status of women in the Church, the organization of ministries, the leadership of base communities, the legitimate and traditional autonomy of religious orders. . . . The Synod is not the master and judge of the Council; it is the servant and ought to let itself be judged by it".

The last remark is perhaps the most revealing of all. It suggests an attitude to the Council resembling that of old-fashioned Protestantism to the Bible. The conciliar teaching is treated as though it had dropped out of the sky ready-made and were self-explanatory. For the *Concilium* group, the Church has no right to interpret its own documents. The idea of a living voice to explain their sense is rejected. Or is it? Not really. God has transferred the living voice from Rome to Nijmegen in Holland, seat of *Concilium's* editorial offices.

### *Demanding Clarifications*

Up to the beginning of October, according to *L'Homme Nouveau*, Canadian Catholics were left in relative peace. Ratzinger's *Report on the Faith* had not yet become available in North America. But as soon as it did, Hans Keung's prima-donnish manifesto appeared simultaneously in *The New York Times*, Toronto's *Globe and Times*, and the Can-

adian French language *Le DeVoir* — in the latter under the title *The Inquisition Returns to Power at the Vatican*.

This was on Oct. 7th. On the 10th the Canadian Hierarchy, hitherto silent, made public their response to the Synod questionnaire.

(Incidentally, in doing so, like the English and United States Hierarchies, they were violating the Synod rules which stipulate that "all those who take part in the Synod are bound to secrecy both about preparatory business and the work of the session".)

The Canadian Bishops, it appears, don't want to be outdone by their English brethren.

"Believers", they say, and they appear to be of the same mind themselves, "are more and more demanding a clarification of moral issues, but they accept less and less anything that looks like a determination to regular consciences".

A clarification? Are Canadian Catholics blind? Deaf? Poor Holy Father. All the teaching of *Familiaris Consortio*, all his addresses on the theology of the body, swept aside as worthless in a single phrase.

But the real giveaway is the Canadian Bishops' ecclesiology.

"It must be recognised that social, political, and cultural circumstances have led people to use the concept of the particular Church for the national or regional Church: the French Church, the Canadian Church, the Church of Ontario. The greater part of the time it is these larger entities" — rather presumably than the individual diocese — "which need to be recognized as having a legitimate autonomy and diversity in the bosom of the universal Church. This diversity which flows from the intimate links between faith and culture, is still too often dealt with through a policy of dispensations which devalues its richness. . . . The principle of subsidiarity on which the Church's social teaching hinges, should be applied much more effectively within the ecclesial institution".

Expert as Modernism is at troublemaking, it is surprising it did not hit on the idea of using the principle of subsidiarity to justify dissent from Rome much sooner. At least it is comforting to know it is sometimes dull-witted.

(I will try to explain why the principle of subsidiarity is not applicable in the Church and civil society in precisely the same way in a later article.)

### *A Conspiracy Theory?*

Having given some samples of the international agitation against the Pope, the Holy See, and the holding of the current Synod, one is left with the question: How spontaneous is this "concerted hammering" as *L'Homme Nouveau* calls it? In other words, does Modernism, as I was once asked, have headquarters somewhere from which it directs its campaigns?

The answer, I think, is yes and no.

There is nothing like a Communist Party headquarters. Its theologians are manifestly too willful to submit to the discipline of that kind of leadership. As a system of ideas, it is also too fluctuating a thing to be easily contained in party directives. But the editorial offices of *Concilium* at Nijmegen do constitute a kind of spiritual center, which keeps the agitation going, or stimulates it when it shows signs of flagging, with subcenters in different countries usually located in the editorial offices of some like-minded periodical.

At the theological level, the conflict between the two stand-points I have been giving examples of in this article represents the final coming apart of the two originally united wings of the reform party at the Council — what Fr. Wiltgen in his *Rhine Flows into the Tiber* calls the "moderate" and "extreme liberal" wings, but for which it soon became obvious the right names were orthodox and heterodox. During and immediately after the Council, the adherents of both wings wrote for *Concilium*. But as that magazine, under the dominating influence of Karl Rahner for whom it had been founded, became more and more openly Modernist, the orthodox reformers, led by Cardinal Ratzinger and Fr. Balthasar, started the rival quarterly *Communio* to counteract its influence. *Concilium's* open letter of the Synod opening "in an atmosphere of hardening of attitudes, weariness, and even indifference". Weariness and indifference on the part of whom? Its own followers? That would indeed be grand news.

This article is written by a layman, doubtless with the thought of not a few good, holy and faithful priests in mind. But the question is, how numerous are they. Are they the exception or the rule? If the former, it is the drift into naturalism of the easy-riding majority that has taken so many of the Faithful with them. Regrettably, it would seem that this is so.

# Despite or Because of their Priests

A LAYMAN'S VIEW

W. M. QUIRK

## *Two Assertions*

“CATHOLICS keep their faith despite their priests”. Pause, followed by a bang on the table for emphasis. “It's true. I'll say it again. Catholics keep their faith despite their priests, not because of them”. Readers could be forgiven for shrugging their shoulders and thinking: Let's have something new. The remark, however, caused rather more of a stir when it was made, thirty or more years ago, to a group of laymen on retreat. Such things were not in those days said aloud. They were probably not thought —except occasionally by priests themselves. Our spiritual mentor that day was quite firm on the point: faithful Catholics deserved far more in the way of pastoral understanding and good example than their priests were ever likely to give them.

This long-forgotten assertion was brought back to my mind recently when a parish priest told me how he had successfully resisted a proposal to move his high altar from its original position. “It wasn't the people who wanted it”, he said. “It came from the deanery. It's the same with all these novelties we have been having. They are all thought up by priests or nuns”. Consideration of the two statements, uttered thirty years apart, set off a train of thought about some contrasts in Catholic life, then and now.

## *The Old Mass Readily Disclaimed*

It would be tedious to illustrate this theme by going back over every detail of the changes which have broken on us since the mid-sixties and I shall not do so. It is clear, though, that a significant factor in altering the way in which many of the laity regarded their priests was, not so much that the latter adopted the *Novus Ordo* when they were told to, but that so many of them readily disclaimed any interest in the rite for which they had been ordained and which they might have been expected to hold in the deepest reverence. Not only did the upending of well over a thousand years of tradition mean nothing to them objectively; neither did the abrupt removal from the centre of their own lives of the forms which had surrounded the sacred mysteries as far back as they could remember. Forms admittedly of human institution and hence by no means irreformable, but which from centuries of use had acquired by association a sacred character and consequently served to strengthen in the minds of the people a firm sense of the sacred though unseen reality of what took place at the altar. Worse still perhaps to the laity was the indifference or impatience shown to those of them who made representations about the devastating impact on their own devotional lives or even made so bold (a little tiresomely, no doubt) as to question the wisdom of what was being done.

*Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis.* Priests changed and so did congregations, including those of us who remained unable or unwilling to share the detachment towards our inheritance, despite the exhortations, continuing to this day, to do just that. We have striven, in our own various ways, to keep our faith, to protect our own devotional lives, as we listened sceptically to the unconvincing explanations and the euphoric prophecies of renewal and then watched gloomily the fulfilment of our own worst fears as traditional values were increasingly scouted. Dom Columba Marmion, the Irish priest who became Abbot of Maredsous and one of the great spiritual teachers of the century, devoted his apostolate to priests. Most of his teaching was collated and published and is as perfectly appropriate to our needs today as to those of his hearers sixty or more years ago. He remarked once : "At times the attitude of some ministers at the altar makes me have

doubts about their faith". The layman will prudently refrain from entertaining such doubts, but he cannot refrain from speculation about the effects of what he sees. The Roman Missal up to the 1962 edition directed the priest to proceed to the altar for Mass *capite coperto, oculis demissis, incessu gravi, erecto corpore*. There were also detailed instructions as to how the hands should be joined. The observance of these rubrics was a reminder to the priest of the solemn nature of what he was about to undertake and an aid to excluding extraneous thoughts. Those in the pews who noted this recollected and self-effacing approach were, in their turn, prompted into the right dispositions. It would be untrue to suggest that this sober deportment had been abandoned today though a wide variety of approach can now be observed. The celebrant will sometimes enter like a colonel about to take parade or like a company chairman briskly taking his place at the shareholders' meeting; at other times, it will be with arms hanging loosely as though out for a stroll; or again, in a lackadaisical manner which will manifest itself at other points — at the Communion, perhaps, when he sits with knees or ankles crossed gazing idly around at the proceedings. The faithful, by and large, will take their cue from this behaviour as they did from the old.

### *Reverence for the Blessed Sacrament*

It is, of course, in relation to the Blessed Sacrament that the change of attitude is most noticeable. Again, Abbot Marmion provides food for thought as we read his grave warning that the greatest danger to the faith of a priest lies in his power over the Body of Christ. ". . . he touches the Sacred Host, he breaks it, he moves it about, it is at his mercy. The devil can avail of this infinite condescension of Jesus to tempt his minister and the minister will need the gift of fortitude to maintain his faith". If there is here a danger to priests, what are we to say of those who have not received the sacramental grace of Orders? It is astonishing how many priests—and bishops—have nevertheless encouraged the widespread recruitment and employment of lay ministers when, within the terms of the law, there was no genuine requirement whatsoever. The outlook was typified by the bishop who told a congregation that some countries

did not have lay ministers at all. "We must pray for them" he said.

How far we have travelled since Abbot Marmion impressed on his priest-hearers that an attitude of profound reverence amounting to adoration was the only fitting one in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. The widespread use of lay ministers, allied to Communion in the hand, does not and will not encourage such an attitude. It would not now be necessary to tour round many churches to sense how the administration of Holy Communion can become a chore to be completed with all haste. To be followed, within moments, by all those business or social (or even jocular) communications which drive away all spirit of recollection and indicate so clearly to modern man what his order of priorities should be. It came as no surprise recently to see a priest holding a conversation with a person who had just received, before he turned to the next communicant.

### *Contemporary Lack of Reverence Contagious*

Unfortunately, these attitudes are contagious and, as our congregations come to consist preponderantly of the age-groups whose religious instruction has been notoriously defective, so the habit of reverence for the Blessed Sacrament will die out. Anecdotal evidence of actual disrespect is not lacking. Only recently, a priest challenged a woman leaving a London church holding a host in her hand. 'Why pick on me?' she objected indignantly. 'What about the others?' It requires no special insight to see that we live in a society in which respect of any sort is at a premium and in a church in which doctrinal ignorance and misconceptions abound, not least in regard to the Mass and the Real Presence. Only the purblind and overweening confidence of the 'experts' could have convinced the authorities that this was a time for knocking down defences rather than raising them up.

### *The Mass Devalued*

If we turn now to consider how far the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is valued, some disturbing pointers can be observed. There are now priests who no longer avail themselves of their privilege of offering three Masses on All Souls' Day

and even Christmas Day. A priest I knew well about fifteen years ago told me why he celebrated only twice on Christmas Day. "The nuns" (his only responsibility at the time) didn't see any point". Two sidelights on that episode : the nuns concerned were engaged in the training of teachers and the priest has since married. A development of the same outlook can be seen when a priest transfers one of his Sunday Masses to Saturday evening. This is often taken as an excuse for not celebrating Saturday's morning Mass. The continental Sunday has long been proverbial. In the holiday resorts, Sunday is often the busiest day of the week and the day of rest is now Monday. Try going to Mass on the day of rest and you are liable to be disappointed. Churches closed all day; no Mass, no anything. Where are the priests? Who knows? You would not recognise them if you saw them.

### *Boredom and the New Mass*

Isolated and unrepresentative instances? Perhaps. Perhaps also a cloud no bigger than a man's hand. Is there a weakening realisation that as often as the commemoration of the Sacrifice is celebrated, so often is the work of our Redemption accomplished? If not, what can be the explanation of any voluntary omission to celebrate the Sacred Mysteries, "these wonderful and truly amazing things" as St. John Chrysostom describes them? One possible reason has been increasingly suggesting itself to me. In the nineteen-sixties I heard a very respectable and orthodox parish priest tell a meeting : "I used the Roman Canon in Latin very happily for twenty-five years. When I had to say it aloud in English every day, it became boring. So I welcomed these new Eucharistic prayers". Could this really be the explanation? Is it possible that boredom has taken hold on us all, priests and people alike? The idea cannot be dismissed out of hand. Most of us, whether we like it or not, hear more talk today than ever was known. Radio and television in continuous operation in the home and, at work, for very many, meetings for discussions and lectures occupy increasing amounts of time. The law of diminishing returns operates. The more we listen to, the less we take in, the less it means. Then, when we go to Mass, we find it is virtually continuous talk; symbolic

ceremonial has largely gone, sacred silence has no more than a token place. We are already conditioned by our experience outside to a low acceptance and retention level, not likely to be raised in the absence of variety. So variety must be provided. First we have all the options in the official texts. Then, we notice the personally-devised renderings at various points, and later, the artificial hesitations and inflections of the voice used, no doubt unconsciously, to convey an impression of spontaneity. The bidding prayers are another example of the same desperate attempt to keep saying the same thing in different ways. Innocuous, yes, but symptomatic. Many readers would be able to quote inappropriate or even distasteful examples of efforts to relieve tedium. We may even suspect that one unacknowledged motive for the introduction of Communion under both kinds was a desire to improve the superficial attractions of Mass attendance. If we come to expect that ever more novelties will be provided as the freshness of earlier ones wears off, then there is no logical end to the process, for otherwise the drift away through lack of interest will accelerate.

### *Priests Go as Safeguards Go*

When one hears with regret yet another report of a priest giving up his ministry to marry, one does not expect to understand what has led him to take that step, but speculation of a sort is bound to arise. What if, one wonders, priests still wore cassock and biretta when in and around their churches; if they did not change into lay attire when they went out socially or even on pilgrimages; if they were seen regularly to kneel in thanksgiving for some time after Mass, at least on weekdays; if the seminaries maintained a traditional discipline; if studies were not so frequently pursued at secular universities; if, if, if. . . Only God knows the answers, but we all know this much. These practices, whether of piety or of conduct, were the norm within living memory, at a time when defections were far less frequent. In the eyes of the people, they served to identify the priest as a man apart. For the priest himself, they had a place among the safeguards of his vocation. Doubtless, in today's world, they represent another source of monotony, of boredom, but if the defences are to be

nonchalantly knocked down, the enemy will enter through the gaps.

### *Veiled Rather than Revealed*

What appears above stems from just one man's experience in various places at home and abroad and, while it by no means exhausts the relevant material, it would be wrong to assert that it is a universal experience. Readers will relate it to their own. Nor would the author wish to deny that Cardinal Ratzinger had much more profound things in mind when he made his celebrated remark about the restoration of values. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise the effect of externals. They are a continuing part of the scenery, their influence is absorbed without too much effort and attention, they can often be more potent for good and bad than the most eloquent instruction.

It is fair to say that, in many ways over the past twenty years, the externals have veiled rather than revealed the true face of religion.

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### **ANCILLA DOMINI — REGINA CAELI**

She walked the ways of peace, untrodden ways  
That only her feet knew, or her eyes saw;  
And each minutest part of God's strong law  
Obediently she followed all her days.  
Unswervingly on Him her soul's fixed gaze!  
Filled with His grace, made lovely with His love,  
Her heart for ever where it's Treasure is — above!  
Oh! well may her the generations praise!  
For in that Hour when Heaven did walk the earth . . .  
When God sent Gabriel her word to gain,  
Honours divine in Nazareth were seen.  
In her so mightily His will wrought worth  
Angelic "Ave!" now acclaims her reign —  
God His Handmaid saw — Gabriel his Queen.

—*Mary Ada George.*

After indicating the really appalling difficulty of the task confronting the Bishops of the Church if they are to re-educate the Faithful in its Truth and, in consequence the true reality of the Vatican Council, as distinct from its alleged "spirit", Father Crane proceeds to consider further vital issues raised by Cardinal Ratzinger in his impressive *Report*.

CURRENT COMMENT

# Report on Two Reports : 2

THE EDITOR

IT requires little more than a cursory reading of the two Reports under consideration in this and a previous article, to bring home to the reader the appalling task that confronts the Church if she is to attempt, even, to acquaint the Faithful with the true reality of the Council's message as distinct from its bogus spirit, which has served as an umbrella for an equally bogus renewal during the past twenty years.

### *True Renewal Requires True Teachers*

It is not merely the size of the task that appals, but the fact that the teachers — presumably priests and religious — were among the first to be corrupted by the prevailing secularism within the Church; and those who have succeeded them and on whom, presumably, the task of true renewal will rest have shared in this corruption, not necessarily through any fault of their own, but simply because so many have been taught what it is not too much to call false doctrine in their seminary or religious years of formation. At the age of thirty now, young priests and religious who were, say, ten years of age at the Council's close are bound, for the most part, to have been affected by the secularizing influence of its bogus spirit.

“Everywhere in the world today”, the Synod Fathers write in their Report, “the transmission of the Faith and of the moral values derived from the Gospel to the next generation (youth) is endangered. Knowledge of the Faith and the recognition of a moral order are often reduced to a minimum. A new effort is required in evangelization and in integral and systematic catechesis”.

### *A Mess to be Cleared*

Quite so. I agree, but I would point out to the Bishops with respect for their office, of course, but with all the vigour I can muster — that, apart from the fact that they have the task *now* of clearing the moral and doctrinal mess for which the lethargy of their predecessors and, in a good many cases they themselves, is so largely responsible, the passage in their Report, which has just been quoted, will represent no more than wishful thinking on their part unless and until they at least make a start now, without delay, at the clearing process. For, they have been told of the mess again and again in past years by Catholics who love the Church; yet, they have given no heed to the words of warning and protest which they have received. On the contrary and in too many cases those who have warned and protested have had inflicted on them at episcopal and parish level an insensitive disregard, amounting in too many cases to what can only be described as virtual ostracism. Now that the pigeons have come home to roost; that the mess is admitted publicly as existing, even though one has to look behind the smooth-flowing phrases of the Synod Fathers *Report* to discover the admission, it is surely not asking too much of the Bishops to request that their actions should be as good as their words; that a beginning, at least, should be made of the essential clearing. Otherwise one will be confronted with the unlovely thought that the Synod *Report* represents little more than yet another piece of episcopal wishful thinking, replete with good intentions — of the sort, they say, that Hell is paved with.

### *Let the Clearing Begin*

This time we expect far more than this; a start, at the very least, of the clearing process. No more and no less

than a series of short-term actions at episcopal level, aimed at clearing the way for true teaching with regard to the reality of the Church in the light of the Council's teaching. In order that this may be given the chance, at least, of a start the prevailing disastrous mess must be cleared. What the clearing process requires then is the removal of false teachers, along with all their works and pomps. Areas to be targetted immediately are, clearly, Seminaries and Houses of Formation of Religious Orders and Congregations (where the energies of Religious Superiors, male and female, should be called on). Next in line, we can place University Chaplaincies, Catholic Teacher Training Colleges (if there are any left), Schools, with particular reference to Religious Instruction in same, Parishes and parish groups of the Renew variety. Lastly and most importantly, Diocesan and National Bureaucracies and Commissions. These must be cleared of the secular neo-Modernists who infect them. This action is negative, of course; so, too, is the removal of a duodenal ulcer. In the longer run both will be seen to be immensely beneficial. This essentially negative action must be begun right away, if the Synod Bishops are to be seen as true to their words. This, quite apart from the fact that the healthy clearance it will represent is the absolutely necessary pre-condition if any kind of true teaching is to take place with regard to the reality of the Church over and against the real message of the Council. Considered by itself alone this is an almost impossible task, which requires an immense preparatory effort. This effort will be stillborn unless the clearance process, which demands the dismissal of the false prophets at present infesting the Church, is undertaken right away. What I have said with regard to these false prophets comprises not merely what they say, but what they have written and continue to write. It is quite wicked to submit Catholic children in School and Catechism Class to the neo-modernistic nonsense which so many of them have produced and which the contemporary Catechetical Establishment is only too willing and too anxious to circulate at the cost of the children on which its members inflict themselves.

### *Pressure of Secularism on the Priest*

One can pass now from a consideration of the task im-

mediately confronting the Bishops and which can be viewed rightly, fairly and with respect as a test of their good faith; from this to a consideration of the Secularism that has affected so many priests and religious in the wake of the Second Vatican Council and, even, during its course. What has happened is that they have lost sight of the Church as of essentially supernatural essence; in the world but not of it, because divine; as such, viewed as a stumbling block, very naturally, by a secularized world. Pressured by this secularism, it is difficult for the priest or religious to resist its all-pervading and utterly poisonous influence, far more subtly administered than the stark hate of open anti-clericalism; difficult to maintain in flower his or her faith in the Church as divine, because God-founded. That so many have done so, given the pressures of contemporary neo-pagan society, is, in its own way, remarkable. Others have not been so fortunate. Over the years, their faith in the Church as a supernatural, because divinely founded, reality has slipped away. They have come to see it as little more than a human construction, made by men and which can be altered and reshaped, therefore, as man desires; and they have been encouraged in this view by pressures from within the Church, which episcopal lethargy has done little or nothing to resist. As the essentially supernatural essence of the Church has slipped over the years from the sight of many a priest, so, too, has his own priestly identity. Small wonder that his position as a priest in a desacralized Church appears to himself as increasingly anachronistic. Cardinal Ratzinger has this to say:

"The very situation of the priest is singular, alien to modern society. A function, a role that is not based on the consent of the majority but on the representation of *another* who lets a man share his authority appears as something incomprehensible. Under these conditions there is a great temptation to pass from that supernatural 'authority of representation', the hallmark of Catholic priesthood, to a much more natural 'service of the coordination of consensus', that is to say, to a comprehensible category, because it is only human and besides, more in consonance with modern culture".  
(Report, p. 56)

The Cardinal continues :

"It is, so to speak, a temptation to flee from the mystery of the hierarchical structure founded by Christ toward the more plausible character of human organisation". (*Report*, p. 56)

They say that the fish rots from the head down. So, also, with human beings. The rot starts at the top. With their priests bewildered, without confidence in themselves, not understanding, the laity were left leaderless. The Bishops, meanwhile, sheltered within the virtual anonymity of Episcopal Conferences. There was no firm stand; no clear teaching. The laity drifted along with their priests; many, sadly but understandably enough, out of the Church. The children got nothing. It could hardly be otherwise. The drift continues. It will be checked only at episcopal level; by action, as outlined above.

### *Break between Bible and Church*

Cardinal Ratzinger outlines the contemporary danger signs (*Report*, pp. 71-81). *The first of these signs* he discerns in terms of the breaking of the bond, which there always has been and always must be, between the Bible and the Church. He analyses the break in terms far more scholarly than those of which I am capable. Nevertheless, it is clear to me that where you have the Catholic Church reduced in the eyes of progressive theologians and scripture scholars to no more than a human construct, bereft of mystery, which is found in the divine life its members share with Christ; where this is the case, then Scripture is not seen, as it must be seen, within the tradition and life of that communion within the Church, which we know as the Mystical Body of Christ. Scripture study, under these circumstances, becomes no more than what might be called "creative" dissection. This, at the top; at the bottom — in Renew groups in the West and basic communities in South America wedded to liberation theology — no more than the plaything of group interpretation wedded to a radical and/or revolutionary ideal, emotionally experienced after "reflection" on passages of Scripture taken out of context and selected to fit that ideal. The result can only be chaos and confusion, whether you look at rationalist scripture scholars

at the top or "facilitators" of basic communities and Renew groups at the bottom. As the Cardinal says so well:

"... the separation of Church and Scripture tends to erode both from within. In fact, a church without a credible biblical foundation is only a chance historical product, one organization among others, and the humanly constructed framework of which we spoke. But the Bible without the Church is also no longer the powerfully effective Word of God, but an assemblage of various historical sources, a collection of heterogeneous books from which one tries to draw, from the perspective of the present moment, whatever one considers useful. An exegesis in which the Bible no longer lives and is understood within the living organism of the Church becomes archaeology: the dead bury their dead. In any case, the last word about the Word of God as Word of God does not in this conception belong to the legitimate pastors, the Magisterium, but to the expert, the professor with his ever-provisional results always subject to revisions". (*Report*, p. 75)

### *The Son Reduced: the Father Forgotten*

*The Second danger sign* Cardinal Ratzinger discerns as "The Son reduced, the Father forgotten". This must be the case where the Church is seen as no more than a human construction, deprived of that more-than-human element, the divine life its members share with Christ. Such a view, which is all too common, though seldom outwardly and defiantly expressed, presupposes a loss of that sense of dependence on God, which marks a true Catholic and, with it, any sense of man's overriding obligation to serve his Creator, Who created the immortal soul that animates him and gives him life, out of absolutely nothing at all. Out of this comes man's primary obligation to serve God through the fulfilment of His Law in man's regard. Where God fades from the lives of those who view the Church as little more than a human construct, the work of *their* hands rather than *His*, it is clear that the obligation to serve God fades as well. There is a boomerang effect here. Where God goes, the Church goes; and vice versa. In consequence, the duty of the individual Christian is seen not in terms of the fulfilment of God's Law, but, rather, as that of the ful-

filment of Himself. Self-realization on *his* terms is seen as man's ideal and that of *his* Church, which is no longer God's. Which means that the pull between this world and the next — time, if you like, and eternity — has triumphed in terms of time. We are back in the Garden of Eden. Autonomous man — so often without knowing it — will take life on his own terms and expect his Church, which he sees as *his* construction and therefore *belonging* to him, to allow — indeed expect — him to do the same. This is what Secularism means. And, where Christ Our Lord is concerned, secular man will see Him on his own terms; which means only as partner or pal (the bewildered pop-kid of "Jesus Christ Superstar"); in no way as divine; in no way, therefore, as possessed of authority, which would place on man an obligation to obey. For one bent on *self*-fulfilment (which means necessarily fulfilment on man's own terms and nobody else's) this can only spell disaster, the end of his dream.

### *No Place for Original Sin*

Clearly, the self-fulfilment ideal has no place for Original Sin (the loss of a sense of which Cardinal Ratzinger sees as his *third danger sign*) and, in consequence, none for a Redemption, which is *from* Original Sin and, in further consequence of these divine events is antithetical to the current sequence of these divine events is anti-thetical to the current fad of self-fulfilment as man's goal, for what the fad necessarily implies is that man, *by his own unaided efforts*, is capable of bringing himself to perfection. This, as the member of a fallen race he cannot do without the help of God's Grace that comes to him through the Sacraments and which Christ Our Lord has placed within the keeping of the Catholic Church, which He founded to extend through time the work of his Redemption; which is no more and no less than the salvation of souls.

### *The Independent Theology*

I have numbered as the *fourth and fifth danger signs* the Cardinal discerns, those which in his *Report* he places first and second. This, I am afraid, was the result of a clerical slip on my part; but no harm will come of it. Simply, keep

it in mind, if you will be so kind. These *two fourth and fifth danger signs* are what Cardinal Ratzinger calls "An Independent Theology" and "A Shattered Catechesis". One follows very obviously from the other. In consequence, they can be taken together. Both flow from the loss by so many Catholics (particularly priests and religious) of any significant sense of the Divine; of the Church as I have already pointed out, as amounting to anything more than a human construct, with its goal the self-fulfilment of its members *on their terms*; to which terms, of course, the man-made Church, built *by* and *for* its members, is under obligation to adapt itself. The rest follows — with "creativity" in the service of men, not fidelity to the Church, as the mark of the contemporary theologian within what so many Progressives choose to think of as the "new", post-conciliar Church (There is, of course, no such thing).

### *A Shattered Catechesis*

Catechetics follow the same muddy road. It cannot do anything else. There is now, within contemporary Catechesis, no nucleus of Truth (where catechizers are concerned) that holds the whole in harmony together. In place of this, the birds and bees have taken over. You have, in consequence, what you must have when and where the Church is considered as no more than a human construction, with its first priority that of serving the self-realization of its members. Let the Cardinal speak here, even though the quotation is a long one. His words are well worth quoting:

"Since theology can no longer transmit a common model of the faith, catechesis is also exposed to dismemberment and to constantly changing experiments. Some catechisms and many catechists no longer teach the Catholic faith in its harmonic wholeness — where each truth presupposes and explains the other — rather they try to make some elements of the Christian patrimony humanly 'interesting' (according to the cultural orientations of the moment). A few biblical passages are set in bold relief because they are viewed as being 'closer to contemporary sensibility'. Hence it is no longer a catechesis that would constitute a comprehen-

sive, all-embracing formation in the faith, but reflections and flashes of insights deriving from partial, subjective anthropological experiences". (*Report*, p. 72)

And, further, in the next paragraph but one:

"All that is said about faith, after all, is organized around four fundamental elements; the *Credo*, the *Our Father*, the *Decalogue*, the *Sacraments*. These embrace the foundation of Christian life, the synthesis of the teaching of the Church based on Scripture and Tradition. Here the Christian finds all he must *believe* (the Symbol or Credo), *hope* (the Our Father), *do* (the Decalogue) as well as the vital space (*Lebensraum*) in which all this must be accomplished (the Sacraments). Today this fundamental structure is neglected in extensive areas of present-day catechesis. The result, as we note, has been a disintegration of the *sensus fidei* in the new generations, who are often incapable of a comprehensive view of their religion". (*Report*, p. 73)

Given the above — and who will doubt its truth? — It is good to note the following recommendations by the Bishops in their *Synod Report*:

"There is a strong general wish for the writing of a catechism or compendium of the whole of Catholic doctrine, both on faith and morals, which could be a point of reference for the catechisms or compendiums composed in various areas. The manner of doctrinal presentation should be biblical and liturgical, offering sound teaching and adapted to the life of Christians today.

"Training for the priesthood must be given the greatest care. Instruction in philosophy should be seen to, and the manner of teaching theology that the decree *Optatam totius* (16) put forward.

"Manuals are recommended provided they offer a theology that is sound, and expressed in a scientific style on good pedagogical principles: they should also inspire a genuine sense of the Church".

And what, my Lords, are you going to do about that? One waits for a sign; hopefully, not in vain.

## *Man-centered Liturgy*

I have said nothing as yet of Liturgy to which Cardinal Ratzinger devotes a chapter (pp. 119-134) of his penetrating *Report*. I have said nothing firstly, because the subject itself has been dealt with so thoroughly in *Christian Order* in terms little different from those employed by the Cardinal. What he says in this context, therefore, will be familiar to its readers. Secondly, because, very obviously, if the Church is seen as constructed by man to meet his need for self-fulfilment, the downgrading of the liturgy to meet that need — of fulfilment for the subject as opposed to the worship of the Creator — follows logically from this false ecclesiology. Man not God is made to stand at the centre of the Mass, the creature not the Creator; a total and quite dreadful reversal of roles.

## *Pluriformity, not Pluralism*

And, finally, one thought, for there is space for little more. Pluriformity, as opposed to pluralism, is rightly upheld by Cardinal Ratzinger and the Synod Bishops in their *Reports*. With this, indeed, I agree. Within this concept of pluriformity, which embraces surely, varied rites of divine worship, as well as legitimate, though differing valid theological approaches as, for example, those of the followers of Saint Thomas Aquinas and Saint Augustine, is there not room for the Roman Tridentine Rite to take a valid and wholly legitimate and honoured place? Readers are referred to the March Editorial of *Christian Order*.

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## **MAY I ASK**

the few who have not yet renewed their subscriptions that were due during the past three months to be so kind as to renew them now or cancel them, as the case may be. This would be the greatest help in keeping our records straight. And may I take this opportunity of thanking the very many who have renewed so promptly and so generously in past months. They have been wonderful. Thank you all so much. Easter Blessings be yours.

—Paul Crane, S.J.

# Sign of Contradiction

PLACID CRONEY, O.P.

WHEN the Holy Father was Archbishop Metropolitan of Cracow, he was invited to Rome by Pope Paul VI to conduct the 1976 Lenten retreat to himself and the Curia. From the printed record of that retreat entitled "Sign of Contradiction" I came upon a passage which more than arrested my attention: it made me stop to reflect and meditate. The passage will be found on pages 34-35. Here it is. "What is said in the third chapter of Genesis seems to lead us all the way to the extreme form of denial, the one adopted by present-day man . . . When the devil says in the third chapter of Genesis: 'your eyes would open and you would become like God', these words express the full range of temptation of mankind, from the intention to set man against God to the extreme form it takes to-day".

We would even say that in the first stage of human history this temptation not only was not accepted but had not been fully formulated. But the time has now come: this aspect of the devil's temptation has found the historical context that suits it. Perhaps we are experiencing the highest level of tension between the WORD and the anti-Word in the whole of human history. Alienation, thought of in this way, implies not only denial of the God of the Covenant, but also of the very idea of God: denial of His existence and, at the same time, the postulate—and in a sense the imperative—of liberation from the very idea of God in order to bolster man.

Here is a typical extract from Feuerbach's book on religion: "In place of love of God, we ought to acknowledge love of man as the only true religion; in place of belief in God we ought to expound man's belief in himself, in his own strength, the belief that humanity's destiny is dependent not on a being higher than humanity but on humanity itself, that man's only demon is man himself—primitive man, superstitious, egoistic, evil—but that similarly man's only god is man himself". We may now be wondering if this is the last lap along that way of denial which started out from around the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

To us who know the whole of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation no stretch of that route can come as a surprise. We accept with trepidation but also with trust the inspired words of the Apostle Paul : "Let no one deceive you in any way; because it is necessary for the rebellion to come, and for the man of sin, the son of perdition to reveal himself . . . (2 Thess 2:3). Mgr. Knox renders this as : "Don't let anyone find the means of leading you astray. The apostasy must come first, the champion of wickedness must appear first, destined to inherit perdition". The next verse is as follows : "This is the rebel who is to lift up his head above every divine name, above all that men hold in reverence, till at last he enthrones himself in God's temple and proclaims himself as God".

We have had many warnings. The Holy Father is persistently proclaiming the truths of Faith but who listens, who cares ? Our Lady of Fatima has warned us. Her message is one of penitence and prayer. She tells us all that unless we pray and persevere in prayer and refuse to be influenced by the world's philosophy and lead an interior life, we shall not see God. How often did she repeat the words prayer and penitence ! The three children took her words literally. They would sit on rocks or on the grass and recall to mind the tiniest details of what they had seen and heard, ever deepening their understanding of it and putting into practice the instructions which they had been given.

"What are you thinking of now ?", Lucia asked Jacinta, noticing the sad look on her face. "I'm thinking of hell and the poor sinners. How sorry I am for the souls who go to hell ! And people burning like coals . . . O Lucia, why doesn't Our Lady show hell to sinners ? If they saw it they certainly wouldn't sin any more ! O Lucia, why ?" "I didn't think of it" answered Lucia sadly. Then the little girl knelt on the ground and joining her hands, repeated between her tears the words which Our Lady had taught them :

"O my Jesus forgive us our sins, and save us from the fire of hell. Take all souls to heaven, especially those who are most in need". Then repeatedly prostrated on the ground, she prayed incessantly : "O my Jesus, forgive us and save us from the fire of hell. . ."

Jacinta interrupted with anguished words : "Oh, Lucia, oh Francisco, we must go on praying, praying to save souls

from hell. So many go there ! If I could truly save them from hell". Didn't St. Theresa of Avila say something to the same effect ? The message — surely for these days especially, when the devil is working overtime, not wasting a minute — is directed in the persons of the little shepherds, to all humanity, to each person in particular, to you and to me,

"Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation". We are Catholics. Worldly philosophies are not for us. Whose side are you on ? With the WORD or the anti-word ? Don't let old Screwtape seduce you. His most vulnerable weapon is the T.V. Our Lord warned us; "Save me Lord from final damnation".

In to-day's Mass St. Paul reminds us : "We live in a world of corrupt and sinful people. You must shine among them like stars lighting up the sky" (Phil. 2:14-15). "Hell is predominating to-day. Everything has become problematic. Any catastrophe is possible tomorrow. We live under the threat of cosmic destruction". The warnings of Our Lady of Fatima have gone unheeded by Catholics throughout the world. Communism has already spread through the entire world, infiltrating even into the Church. The power of Our Lady can convert the Communist World, but only if we waken up and take her message to heart. She asks us to pray, to be mortified and to turn ourselves away from the world to God. Time is running out. The devil is at work everywhere. Our Lady has told us so. Pope Pius XI told us the smoke of the devil was in the Church. It could well be; in very deed it is. Not a few holy people have said that Screwtape has been working surreptitiously in the Church for at least a decade and a half until to-day when he works manifestly.

I would dare prophecy (my own personal opinion) that in the not far distant future we Catholics shall be called upon to defend our Faith to martyrdom. May God grant His grace to those who live in those days. All the signs are pointing that way. These will be the remnant. What has happened before can happen again. St. John Fisher foresaw the way things would go many years before the disastrous outbreak of the so-called English Reformation. He alone of the English Hierarchy had not failed to watch.

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# Disentangling Moral Confusion

*(The Distinction Between the "Law of Gradualness" and the "Gradualness of the Law")*

WOLFGANG WALDSTEIN, LL.D.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

“... They cannot however look on the law as merely an ideal to be achieved in the future; they must consider it as a command of Christ the Lord to overcome difficulties with constancy. And so what is known as ‘the law of gradualness’ or step-by-step advance cannot be identified with ‘gradualness of the law’, as if there were different degrees or forms of precept in God’s law for different individuals and situations”. *Familiaris Consortio* #34.

The above quotation from the Apostolic Exhortation, written by Pope John Paul II, is a clarification of widespread thinking on the subject of gradualism.

Briefly, “the law of gradualness” simply means, for example, that our growth towards perfection in the spiritual life is gradual through patient step-by-step endeavors.

This fact has been misused by some modern theologians to justify a false idea which in effect amounts to a "gradualness of the law". These theologians reason that in the same way in which we grow to perfection by stages, the law itself changes and develops by stages. They do not go so far as to state this explicitly, rather they glide into it and proceed as if it followed self-evidently. They interpret the strict moral commandments of God as merely ideals, which are not meant to be binding at once on all men or in all societies. This sophistical notion views the law as "gradual—as changing with the individual and history.

"Gradualness of the law" theory pervades the thought of many modern theologians, many modern catechetical texts, and much of sex education. For instance, in the Dutch Catechism there is ambiguity in the chapter "The Origin of the Decalogue" (p.361-4), which says: "The story of Sinai is the succinct expression . . . of a long historical process . . . The sense of values expressed in the Commandments has to be adapted to human societies . . . every effort at adaptation bears the stamp of a certain type of society at a given epoch . . . There is always a growth of insight into good and evil . . . The law, the precise precept, cannot foresee exactly all circumstances", etc.

We find similar ambiguities in many other texts. *Christ Among Us*, by Anthony Wilhelm, states that premarital chastity and even the indissolubility of marriage are not so much absolute commandments as they are ideals to live up to. Moreover, it states that "some cannot live up to this ideal". And even: "What is a beautiful and attainable ideal namely premarital chastity for one couple may be deeply frustrating and disruptive for another". (p. 341-6) The widely-used textbook, *Making Moral Decisions*, by Richard Reichert, is still worse.

In the U.S.C.C. Guidelines, *Education in Human Sexuality for Christians*, sin is defined merely as "missing the mark" or "failing to live up to a standard". (p. 13) These are but a few examples.

The Holy Father therefore specifically asked for further development of the distinction he made in the above quote from *Familiaris Consortio*. Professor Waldstein was asked

to develop this topic in a conference given at the International Congress on the Philosophy and Theology of Responsible Procreation sponsored by the John Paul II Pontifical Institute for the Study of Marriage and the Family, held at the Lateran University in Rome, June 1-8, 1984. At the congress, the participants were addressed by John Paul II himself. The Holy Father desired and encouraged this initiative of the Institute so that the teaching embodied in *Humanae Vitae* and *Familiaris Consortio* might be better understood.

The following is a much shortened edition of Professor Waldstein's conference paper.

## GRADUALNESS OF THE LAW

### *The Spirit of the World*

While "the law of gradualness" presupposes and accepts the absolute validity and binding force of the law, the exact opposite is the case when it is inverted into the "gradualness of the law", which teaches that the law is *not* binding in every case. The essence of this latter notion can only be understood in connection with the spirit of the world, to which Pope Paul VI referred in his Encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*. This spirit has among other things developed the idea that all laws, legal or moral, are made by men for men, and can therefore also be changed by men according to their wishes or alleged needs. Where a law exists which cannot simply be changed by a parliament, for instance, because it is codified either in a constitution, or in an international human rights convention, or given as natural law by nature, or by God, a problem arises for those who want to depart from it. The law protecting human life in Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights, for instance, was felt to be an obstacle to the legalization of abortion, when the latter became desirable in the years following the drafting of the Convention. As a result, those in favor of abortion began to argue that the law does not extend its protection to the unborn.

Of course, all sorts of arguments were used to rationalize these decisions, but they all amounted to a gradualization

of the law protecting human life. [By the expression "the gradualization of the law", Prof. Waldsein means the selective and logically arbitrary application of the law. Ed.] As a result, about 50 million unborn are killed in the world every year. It is hard to imagine what this means in all its consequences, especially for those performing these actions and taking part in them. A disregard for human life and human rights has developed on an unimaginable scale.

### *Limitless Erosion of the Law*

Once one starts gradualizing the law, that is, applying the law selectively, there is no limit to what may be done "legally". As a logical consequence of this first step, a further gradualizing of the law protecting human life is more and more openly discussed. Aged and seriously ill persons are often felt to be a heavy burden for their families as well as for society. However, this is not admitted openly. Instead, proponents of euthanasia speak about sparing the sick and aged further suffering. Death with dignity has become a convenient catchword. Its proponents pretend to help human beings to die in a humane way. But in fact they are arrogating to themselves the right to decide over the life and death of another person as soon as someone thinks that the life has become "meaningless". It has been openly stated that modern science compels society to take over God's decision over life and death.

### *Rationalizing Dissent from *Humanae Vitae**

It was against this flood-tide of secular, positivistic, relativistic, and atheistic ethical ideas (part of the development of a new Gnosis in our times that Pope Paul VI, notwithstanding massive pressure, but standing firm on the rock which is Christ, dared to promulgate the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*). Our present Holy Father says that his predecessor, "handed on to our times a truly prophetic proclamation" and that the Church, "as teacher . . . never tires of proclaiming the moral norm that must guide the responsible transmission of life. The Church is in no way the author or the arbiter of this norm. In obedience to the truth which is Christ, Whose image is reflected in the nature and dignity of the human person, the Church interprets the

moral norm and proposes it to all people of good will, without concealing its demands of radicalness and perfection".

Given this situation, the reaction, as is well-known, was an organized, world-wide scream of protest. Most moral theologians, who had already presumed the Church would change its teaching on contraception and had accepted some kind of new ethic, thought they ought to "liberate" people from such an outdated law.

One of the subterfuges for rationalizing the non-binding force of *Humanae Vitae* was the idea of the "gradualness of the law". Another one was the divorce of subjective moral conscience from an objective moral law. It is terribly sad to be confronted with the fact that theological experts were able to persuade many Bishops' Conferences to adopt statements by which "gradualness of the law" was introduced. Thus, the Austrian Bishops' Conference passed such a statement known as "*Maria roster Erklärung*" in September 1968 and repeated it in a still more general way after the Synod of Bishops in 1980 with the following words: "Married people, who after serious consideration think they are unable to accept the method of regulating conception proposed by the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, do not commit any wrong if they are ready to continue their considerations conscientiously".

It is perfectly clear that here the binding force of the law is made dependent on a person's readiness to accept it. The law itself is in this way gradualized to no more than "the measure of the various situations in which spouses find themselves".

Whether the bishops involved realized it or not, it is a most unfortunate fact that they and others with similar statements (as, for instance, the "*Koenigsteiner Erklärung*") concurred with the theological experts in failing to respond to the urgent appeal to priests for the right use of their "sacred office" made by *Humanae Vitae* (#28): "In the performance of your ministry you must be the first to give an example of that loyal (sincere) obedience, inward as well as outward, which is due to the Magisterium of the Church". The fact that so many bishops' conferences failed to respond to this appeal had very serious conse-

quences for their own authority, and therefore for the entire life of the Church, because, as Vatican II stated clearly in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: "Bishops, teaching in communion with the Roman Pontiff, are to be respected by all as witness to divine and Catholic truth". It is undeniable, however, that the "gradualness of the law" was not introduced in communion with the Roman Pontiff.

### *Evading Objective Moral Laws*

It follows as a logical consequence from the "gradualness of the law", first, that conscience does not have to be bound by objective moral norms, and secondly, that any valid law can be deprived of its strictly binding force, or of any binding force, simply by alleging that a person does not feel able to respond to it.

It is easy to see that it would under no circumstances be lawful or morally admissible to kill an innocent person deliberately, whatever the intentions or motives are. A main reason for the immorality of this act is that man must not assume the role of God whose "possession man is", as Plato says. It is most revealing that even those arguing for euthanasia see that this implies assuming God's right over life and death. But our Holy Father made clear, the same is true of "married couples", who by practicing contraception: "assume the qualifications not of being cooperators in God's creative power, but the ultimate source of human life. In this perspective, contraception is to be judged objectively so profoundly unlawful as never to be, for any reason, justified. To think or to say the contrary is equal to maintaining that in human life situations may arise in which it is lawful not to recognize God as God".

### *Charity Demands True Teaching*

It becomes obvious that the proponents of "gradualness of the law" have not introduced the theory in order to help people slowly to accept a law even if at first it must be presented "as merely an ideal to be achieved in the future" — thereby turning a law into an aspiration, a so-called "goal commandment" (*Zielgebot*). No, on the contrary,

they are using it as an instrument to free men from the obligation of a law which they consider "not suitable for every man, for every situation, and so . . . (they desire) . . . to replace it with an order different from the divine". Most of those who teach the "gradualness of the law" probably believe that they must do so out of love for men. However, they obviously do not believe in the truth of Christ's words (*Jn. 8:32*) evoked by *Humanae Vitae* (#29): "To diminish in no way the saving teaching of Christ constitutes an eminent form of charity for souls". In fact, the proponents of "gradualism of the law" are failing to respond to the right of every "disciple of Christ . . . to receive 'the word of faith' not in mutilated, falsified or diminished form, but whole and entire, in all its rigour and vigour".

### *The Situation Today*

Because of the majority opinion of the experts on the Papal Commission before *Humanae Vitae* was promulgated, many expected the law to be abolished. In practice, long before that, it had been widely taught, with the consent of many bishops, that the law against contraception was no longer valid. When the encyclical was promulgated many simply were not prepared to accept it. So the "gradualness of the law" was devised as a means of circumventing the law by arguing that it is not binding in every case.

This, however, led quickly to the prevailing conviction that obedience is not obligatory. When we are told that if we feel unable to obey the law, we are not obliged to obey it, we very soon develop a habit of ignoring the law altogether. In this way people are led to choose incorrectly between the "two irreconcilable concepts of the human person and of human sexuality", which *Familiaris Consortio* (#32) speaks of. In this way they are caught more and more by the spirit of the world. They are lulled into a false peace of conscience, which prevents them from becoming aware of their wrong-doing and from turning back to God's mercy. In these circumstances the road to reconciliation is blocked. This road is the Sacrament of Penance, one of the main fruits of redemption. *Humanae Vitae*

teaches us that we must "have recourse with humble perseverance to the mercy of God, which is poured forth in the Sacrament of Penance". The clouding of conscience is certainly one of the reasons for the alarming decline of the Sacrament of Penance (a problem which was confronted by the last Bishops' Synod). In the last analysis, the "gradualness of the law" is therefore opposed to any growth towards justice or greater love of God. On the contrary, it leads men to the "wide and broad" road which "many take". The word of Christ hat this road "leads to perdition"; whereas it is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads to life, and only a few find it", is not really believed.

Whatever may be the individual motives or intentions of those who lead people into the wide and broad road, the "gradualness of the law" is, in fact, one of "the tricks men play" in "their cleverness in practicing deceit" described by St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians. It does not help people to grow spiritually, or to become more lawful and just, or morally better. On the contrary, it leads to the disregard of any natural or divine law, and finally of truth itself.

# Book Review

## FAITH NOT IN VAIN

**The Third Day** by Sir Arnold Lunn; Republished by Roman Catholic Books, P.O. Box 255, Harrison, N.Y., USA; pp. 177; \$11.95.

In their Report at the close of the Extraordinary Synod in the first days of December last year (1985) the participating Bishops called for a return to the reality of Vatican II; an understanding of its true meaning, which can only be expressive of the truth consigned to the Catholic Church by its Divine Founder, Jesus Christ Our Lord. With that call no Catholic, worthy of the name, can be in any but full and complete agreement.

At the same time, no one will deny that, in the years since the Council, that truth has been not merely obscured, but denied by so-called exponents of the Council's message. These have put their own neo-Modernist and secular interpretation on its message; not merely fuzzing it to the confusion and distress of the Faithful, but, not infrequently, by implication and sometimes, indeed, expressly, denying or calling in question the eternal and divine truths that underly what the Council has had to say as, for example, in the case of the Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Here the neo-Arians who are prominently enough in our midst, have had something of a field day. And not only where the Divinity of Our Lord is concerned. They have sought to brush His Mother aside into obscurity, questioning her own Immaculate Conception and her Son's Virgin Birth. Questioning, too, the supernatural nature of the Church He founded, along with Original Sin, the Redemption, the Resurrection and so on until it would appear that very little is left — in the minds, that is to say, of too many bemused Catholics, to say nothing of their clerical and religious bemusers.

Under these circumstances, parallel with the endeavour to clarify for the Faithful the true meaning of the Council, there must go, surely, an immense endeavour to clarify the true doctrinal and moral teaching of the Church. For you cannot clarify the Council unless you clarify also the basic

truths of the Faith on which the teaching of the Council rests. These must be proclaimed fearlessly—in season and out of season—if the credibility of the Church's teaching authority is to be restored. Hence the need, not only for those who teach; but for those who write in defence of the Church's truth. If neo-Modernism is to be put down—along with the neo-Arianism (contemporary denial of Christ's divinity), which may be classed as its running-dog—not only do we need strong Apologists for the Faith, but books on Apologetics. It is one of the signs of the times that the latter are beginning to make their appearance once again.

Of these, the late Sir Arnold Lunn's *The Third Day*, is an outstanding example. I first read it 40 years or more ago. Most happily it has been republished last year (1985) and it is a copy of this republished edition that I have now under review. This second reading of what I have always considered a great book convinces me, once more, that it is ideally suited to the purpose I have in mind, as I have just expressed it above; namely, literature that is, indeed and rightly, controversial yet, at the same time, well within the grasp of those capable, not only of reading it, but of understanding and, indeed, retailing to others its well-marshalled argument. Sir Arnold was not only an able controversialist. That would be an understatement. He was an extremely incisive one. Behind his prose, which runs so easily, there lies an immense background of reading and thought. Most, today, are not capable of that for various sound reasons, but there are many who want to know. We are all so tired today of the neo-Modernist mish-mash served up today as the cheapest of substitutes for the Faith of Our Fathers. We want to do something about it.

Here in this book you have the triumphant defence of Christ Our Lord's greatest miracle, which clinches finally and for any man of good-will the blinding and wonderful truth of His Divinity. "If Christ be not risen from the dead", said St. Paul, "then is our Faith vain". It is, indeed. This is what the neo-Modernists would have with their nonsense of the Resurrection as no more than a "collective hallucination"—Sir Arnold makes short work of that—a "shared experience" (oh, glorious contemporary phrase) and the rest of the nonsense which is made to pass for truth in

their circles and which they inflict out of the depths of their own wilful ignorance on those unfortunate enough to be on the receiving edge of their own meaningless verbiage. You can call me unkind for writing thus? I reply: what can be more unkind than to inflict this kind of heretical talk on any captive audience of the Faithful, the more so if it is composed of children at a so-called catechism class, or students at school or in a university chaplaincy? I would have thought the crime of a drug-pusher as less than this, on any Christian scale of values; that murder of the body by the drug-pusher is far less than that of the neo-Modernist catechist, who murders the soul.

Sir Arnold, of course, when he wrote this book, being a true controversialist, knew that he had to establish, by way of essential preliminary, the authenticity of the Gospels as true eye-witness accounts of the words and deeds of Our Lord. This he does very successfully within the space he allows himself and with the arguments in favour handled beautifully, with deftness and thrust. Prior to this he deals with the *fact* of miracles in general terms, again in a manner that leaves one with the assurance that here is the truth presented by a great Catholic who is not only a writer of total intellectual integrity but a master of his craft. The confidence he inspires is immense and most strengthening for the reader. *O, si sic omnes!* I would that there were more like him. We are all in his debt, not only as regards this splendid piece of apologetic writing, but for so many others he wrote; and wrote so well and so effectively.

It is my hope that National Catholic Books will publish another splendid piece of Sir Arnold's writing which I reread recently and shall soon read again. *A Saint in the Slave Trade*, which is not only the story of St. Peter Claver, but one of the finest concise studies of the Catholic Church and Slavery that I have read. Meanwhile, I commend to readers as warmly as I can the book here under review, *The Third Day*. Its publication is now more necessary than ever.

*Paul Crane, S.J.*

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